



## THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

**YOUR CHILD AND HIS PROBLEMS—A Basic Guide for Parents.** Joseph D. Teicher, M.D., Director, Child Guidance Clinic of Los Angeles, Attending Physician (Psychiatry), Children's Hospital, Los Angeles; formerly Psychiatrist in Charge, Child Guidance Clinic, St. Luke's Hospital, New York City. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, Mass., 1953. 301 pages, \$3.75.

Of the many books now coming out for the guidance of parents concerning the management of their children, this is one which the physician can recommend as psychiatrically sound and based upon extensive clinical experience. While the book, purportedly, is directed primarily to parents, the physician may find its clinical orientation and its wealth of suggestions useful in his opportunities to counsel parents in regard to the normal development of children, their management, and the common difficulties met in their socialization.

The book is simply and interestingly written, and the chapters are well outlined with topic headings. It begins with a consideration of parental feelings before and after the birth of a child, describes the normal personality development of the infant, and advises in regard to management of the child's eating, toilet and sleeping routines. Chapters are then devoted to such topics as sexual education, jealousy, fears, play and possessions, and "limitations, frustrations, and doing the right thing." "Family stress and strains" are also discussed with an understanding of, and sympathy for, parental difficulties. The contents also include chapters on children's school problems, the effect of comic books, radio, movies, and television upon children, and the psychological handling of physical illness and handicaps. There is even an attempt to explain to parents the use of psychological tests.

To the extent that parents are mature, reasonably well adjusted themselves, and thus capable of making use of information and advice, this book should well serve in the interests of the mental health of children. Parents who are disturbed by their own emotional and social difficulties, however, and those whose faulty relationship to their children is determined by inner forces of which they are unaware, will be able to make the best use of the knowledge contained in this book only if it comes to them through a therapeutic relationship with their physician.

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**THE CONCEPTION OF DISEASE—Its History, Its Version and Its Nature.** Walther Riese, M.D., Philosophical Library, New York, 1953. 120 pages, \$3.75.

Meditation is a gentle art, reputedly best practiced in a quiet place—by mountain stream, by lake, on distant peak—but in the noise-rent city or gusty seashore it seems to lead to introspection. And this in turn, if pen and paper be nearby, to treatise philosophic or book conceptual.

This small book skims through the author's conceptions of the Stoic, Platonic and anthropologic viewpoints of disease, pauses to consider the moral and artistic aspects, and

then plunges into a series of short chapters on the Hippocratic, Baglivian, Galenic and anatomic conceptions. Then follow sections on the social, psychologic, ontologic and, believe it or not, biographic conceptions. Finally, after a short excursion through the dialectic underbrush, the meta-physical conception is reached.

Some of the passages are refreshing and highly informative, but many seem to this reviewer to bear the ponderous glove. We are reminded that Plato held that disease was the result of excess or defect of the four corporal constituents (earth, fire, water and air). Proper proportions of these were held to be equally essential for health. Conversely, the relations of soul and body should be in equal balance. A relatively large or impassioned soul convulsed the inner man; too large or strong a body debased the soul. . . . "ignorance being considered the greatest of diseases." A verity indeed.

The chapter on disease and art travels the well-worn ground of impressionistic and expressionistic art forms, debating the difficulty of distinguishing the psychotic from the unconventional, and stressing that while disease may stimulate talent it does not create art. Freud bears not infrequent reference, and Nietzsche a modicum.

The author's own conception of disease is suggested by his emphasis that disease and the individual are both abstractions, ergo all is abstract and nature escapes our knowledge. Perhaps it should have been added that disease is a commonality and therefore a relatively normal phenomenon, just as discord, unhappiness and war are normal, whereas health, tranquillity and peace are distinctly rare, or unusual, or in other words abnormal.

The gentle and confused reader may now wish to return to Thomas Sydenham who observed "A disease, in my opinion, how prejudicial soever its causes may be to the body, is no more than a vigorous effort of nature to throw off the morbid matter, and thus recover the patient."

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**CHILD DEVELOPMENT—The Process of Growing Up in Society.** William E. Martin and Celia Burns Stendler, Professor of Education, University of Illinois—under the editorship of Willard B. Spalding, Oregon State System of Higher Education. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1953. 519 pages, \$6.50.

This is a textbook in child development. Accordingly, it is organized for a systematic study of the subject, contains throughout provocative questions for discussion, includes 32 pages of photographic illustrations (also a sprinkling of cartoons), and concludes each chapter with a small but well selected and recent bibliography for further reading. It is more than a description of child behavior at the various stages of development with which physicians are becoming more or less familiar; rather, it draws upon the fields of biology, physiology, pediatrics, sociology, anthropology, and